

Contributions to the SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future

Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development's [Annual Report 2023 - A/HRC/54/41](#)

Operationalizing the right to development in the new agenda for peace, including investing in conflict prevention and peacebuilding

by Mr. Mihir Kanade

In his report on Our Common Agenda, the Secretary-General highlighted the need for a new agenda for peace that addressed the multidimensional challenges that the international community faced today and for a peace continuum based on a better understanding of the underlying drivers and systems of influence that were sustaining conflict. A renewed effort to agree on more effective collective security responses and a meaningful set of steps to manage emerging risks were also needed. Among the six potential core areas for action set out in the report was investing in prevention and peacebuilding.

In his report, the Secretary-General proposed that a new agenda for peace could renew calls for Member States to allocate a dedicated amount of assessed contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund. This complementary investment would increase the sustainability of peacekeeping outcomes and support the development agenda.

Operationalizing the right to development through these efforts can ensure better and more sustainable results. The Declaration on the Right to Development recognizes the mutually dependent relationship between development, understood as a human right, and peace and security. Violations of human rights, which are often the root cause of conflict and violence, are key obstacles to the realization of the right to development. The Declaration also recognizes the importance of peace and security, including disarmament, in the realization of the right to development. At the same time, the 2030 Agenda recognizes the mutually dependent relationship between sustainable development and peace. Neither can be realized without the other.

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding require the establishment of enabling national and international environments. National efforts to invest in these can include reducing excessive military budgets and channeling the savings to enhance social spending and ensuring the effective rule of law and good governance. International efforts to invest in such efforts can include an increase in targeted development assistance, eliminating obstacles to the realization of the right to development and other human rights resulting from lopsided investment or trade agreements and adopting international development policies that foster peace and sustainable development. Investing in conflict prevention and peacebuilding must be based on the duty of international cooperation inherent in the right to development. To this end, article 4 (1) of the Declaration recognizes that States have the duty to take steps, individually and collectively, to formulate international development policies with a view to facilitating the full realization of the right to development.

The call to reduce excessive military budgets and ensure adequate social spending should not be seen as a soft moral appeal but rather a reflection of the normative framework of duties incumbent upon States. Indeed, article 7 of the Declaration stipulates that all States should promote the establishment, maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security and, to that end, should do their utmost to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control, as well as to ensure that the resources released by effective disarmament measures are used for comprehensive development, in particular that of the developing countries.



Development assistance under a new agenda for peace should be anchored in the normative principles of the right to development to better ensure that the root causes of conflicts are addressed, and the rights of individuals and peoples are upheld. This requires that development assistance not be seen as charity but rather is designed and implemented through the lens of the duty to cooperate. As such, development assistance should be tailored to the self-determined development priorities of the rights holders in the country concerned. Their right to actively, freely, and meaningfully participate in and contribute to their own development must be respected and the benefits of such assistance must be enjoyed by all without discrimination. Particular attention must be given to the participation and contribution of the marginalized and vulnerable sections of societies. Under no circumstances should development assistance infringe upon human rights. Human rights impact assessments and due diligence of development assistance, including through a gendered lens, must be conducted prior to, during and after the implementation of projects. Finally, development assistance must not be conditional or debt creating. Local employment should be generated as much as possible.

The objectives of sustainable development, peacebuilding and human rights can best be brought under one umbrella by harnessing the normative framework of the right to development. The new agenda for peace, including investing in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, will therefore benefit substantially from the mainstreaming of the right-to- development framework.

